



# Experience Health for Life

## Veterans' WELLNESS 2014

A GUIDE TO HEALTHY LIVING FOR THE VETERANS OF UPSTATE NEW YORK

# Live a Healthier Life

Good health is important to a productive, happy life, whether you are 22 or 82. To help you on your healthy life journey, the theme of the 2014 *Veterans' Wellness* calendar is *Experience Health for Life*. This calendar is designed to remind you to eat well and exercise every day.

Increasing your activity level and improving your diet are two important parts of any treatment plan prescribed by health care providers in the 21st century. Research has shown that good nutrition and exercise can help you ward off disease or manage chronic health issues.

So make this new year a healthy one! Start by asking your VA Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) to help you establish a healthy diet and exercise program in 2014.

Wishing you a very happy and safe holiday season,



JAMES CODY, FACHE  
Interim Network Director



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Interim Network Director

VA health care meets the standards of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). For more information on the ACA, visit [www.va.gov/aca](http://www.va.gov/aca).

## Veterans Suffering from Low Back Pain

**Are you a Veteran 18 to 65 years old who has been suffering from low back pain?** If so, you may be eligible to participate in a study comparing two types of shoe inserts, at no cost to you! If you qualify, you will be required to come in for four visits over a six-month period. You will be compensated \$20 per visit for your time and travel, up to \$80 for your participation. This study is taking place at the Rochester VA Outpatient Clinic. If you live within the Rochester area and are interested in this study, please call **585-463-2673** for more information.

STICK  
TO IT

Use the stickers found in this calendar to keep you on track for a healthy year. We've provided a few places where you can use your stickers in January, March, June, September, November and December.

## MAKE SENSE OF 5 EXERCISE MYTHS

*You know you should move for 30 minutes each day. Or is it 60? And you should be lifting weights and stretching. But when? Before you make your exercise goals for the year, separate the myths from the facts.*

**MYTH 1: Everyone needs at least 30 uninterrupted minutes of exercise every day.**

**FACT:** An average adult should get 30 minutes of exercise every day. If you exercise more vigorously, fewer and shorter sessions offer the same benefit as longer sessions of moderate exercise. Exercising vigorously means you are too out of breath to talk while working out. Running, playing singles tennis and biking uphill are a few examples of vigorous exercise.

**MYTH 2: If I'm young and healthy, I don't need to check with my VA provider before starting an exercise program.**

**FACT:** No matter your age or health status, you should always talk with your VA provider first before you start an exercise program.

**MYTH 3: I should lift weights every day.**

**FACT:** It's better to avoid exercising the same muscle groups two days in a row because your muscles need to rest. Do strength-building exercises, such as weight lifting, two or three days a week

for about 20 minutes at a time. This way, you'll gain strength while avoiding injury from too much weight training.

**MYTH 4: I should always stretch before exercising.**

**FACT:** Over the years, experts have changed their recommendations about stretching. They now say that stretching before you exercise isn't the best idea. Before you start your workout, your muscles are cold. Stretching them can cause tiny tears in the muscles. But remember to always stretch after performing aerobic or strength exercises, when your muscles are warm.

**MYTH 5: Diet alone can help me shed pounds.**

**FACT:** Modifying your diet can help you lose weight. But the National Institutes of Health says that to promote healthy weight loss, you should combine sensible eating with exercise. Here's how much exercise you need daily depending on your weight loss goals:

- 30 minutes – I am currently happy with my weight.
- 60 minutes – I am trying to lose weight.
- 90 minutes – I have lost weight and want to keep it off.



# Routine Health Care Monitoring

WHAT IT IS	WHY YOU NEED IT	VA RECOMMENDATIONS	GOAL COMPLETE
<b>Blood pressure reading</b>	High blood pressure has no symptoms	Every year after age 18 and at every primary care visit	<input type="checkbox"/> Blood pressure reading
<b>Cholesterol profile</b>	Low HDL (good cholesterol), high triglycerides and LDL (bad cholesterol), and high total cholesterol can increase heart disease risk	Every 5 years or more frequently if recommended by your VA primary care provider	<input type="checkbox"/> Cholesterol check
<b>Influenza (flu) immunization</b>	To prevent the flu	Every year for all adults	<input type="checkbox"/> Flu vaccine
<b>Pneumonia vaccine</b>	To prevent serious respiratory illness	Once at age 65; sooner for certain medical conditions; single 5-year booster dose recommended if initial vaccine prior to age 65	<input type="checkbox"/> Pneumonia vaccine
<b>Tetanus and pertussis (Tdap) immunization</b>	To protect against tetanus and whooping cough	CDC recommends Tdap immunization in place of tetanus booster once between ages 19 and 65	<input type="checkbox"/> Tdap vaccine
<b>Breast and cervical cancer screenings</b>	For early detection of precancerous tissue growth and cancer	Annual women's health visit with your provider to determine appropriate mammography and Pap test screenings	<input type="checkbox"/> Mammogram and Pap test
<b>Bone density screening</b>	For early detection of osteoporosis	Bone density test routinely for women after age 65; test at age 60 if increased risk for osteoporotic fracture	<input type="checkbox"/> Bone density test
<b>Colorectal cancer screening</b>	For early detection of precancerous tissue growth and cancer	Begin screening at age 50 until age 75; may need earlier screening if positive family history	<input type="checkbox"/> Colorectal cancer screening
<b>Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening</b>	To detect weakened blood vessels	Test once for men ages 65–75 who have ever smoked	<input type="checkbox"/> AAA screening
<b>Hepatitis C screening</b>	Exposure to the hepatitis C virus can harm your liver	For those with military service during the Vietnam era and those exposed to the virus via sexual contact, tattoos or piercings, blood transfusions prior to 1992, and the sharing of personal items	<input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis C screening
<b>Tobacco and alcohol use</b>	Smoking and alcohol abuse can lead to serious illness	Every year; your PACT team can help you with controlling alcohol use and quitting smoking	<input type="checkbox"/> Quit smoking <input type="checkbox"/> Use alcohol in moderation or quit
<b>PTSD and depression screening</b>	PTSD and depression can have a negative impact on health and quality of life	Every year; your PACT team will help identify and treat psychological issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Talked with my doctor about my mental health
<b>Routine eye examinations</b>	To check for glaucoma, cataracts and other eye diseases	As recommended by your VA primary care provider based on your medical conditions, family history or new visual symptoms	<input type="checkbox"/> Eye exam

# Clock Stoppers:

EXERCISES FOR YOUR 40's AND BEYOND



**STARTING AT AROUND AGE 40**, you naturally begin losing muscle. In fact, older adults lose 4 to 6 pounds of muscle tissue per decade.

Regular exercise can help you maintain your muscle strength. Don't accept the loss of muscle as a fact of life. It's never too late to improve your strength.

Here are three strength-training moves to help keep you strong and prevent falls. Aim to do them at least twice a week.

## Wall Push-ups

Wall push-ups aren't as hard to do as push-ups on the floor. They still help strengthen your arms, shoulders and chest.



### TO-DO TACTIC:

1. Face the wall with your feet planted and your arms shoulder-width apart.
2. Do a push-up against the wall by bending your elbows and slowly lowering your body toward the wall as you count to four.
3. Then push yourself off the wall by slowly straightening your arms on the count of four. Don't lock your elbows.
4. Repeat 10 times. Rest for a minute. Then do a second set of 10.

Photos courtesy of National Institute on Aging at NIH, **Go4Life**® Exercise and Physical Activity Campaign. For more exercise ideas, please visit [www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life](http://www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life).

## Calf Raises

Calf raises strengthen your calves and ankles, which makes walking more enjoyable. They also reinforce your sense of balance and can keep you from falling.



### TO-DO TACTIC:

1. Hold on to a chair or the kitchen counter for balance.
2. Slowly rise up on your toes as far as you can while counting to four.
3. Hold for two to four seconds.
4. Lower your heels to the floor while counting to four.
5. Repeat 10 times. Rest for a minute. Then do a second set of 10.

## Squats

Squats help keep your hips, thighs and butt muscles strong so that you can continue to walk and climb stairs easily.



### TO-DO TACTIC:

1. Stand with your back to a chair with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Extend your arms in front of you.
3. Slowly bend your knees and sit down in the chair while counting to four.
4. Then stand up to the count of two while keeping your knees over your ankles and your back straight.
5. Repeat 10 times. Rest for a minute. Then do a second set of 10.

THANK YOU to the *Veterans' Wellness* Advisory Board for their recommendations and consultation on the 2014 *Veterans' Wellness* calendar.

## RED AND YELLOW PEPPER OMELET



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 sweet red pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 yellow pepper, thinly sliced
- 4 egg whites
- ½ teaspoon dried basil
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons grated Parmesan cheese, divided

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a large nonstick frying pan over medium heat, warm oil. Add the peppers and cook, stirring frequently for 4 to 5 minutes. Keep warm over low heat, stirring occasionally.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg whites, basil and black pepper.
3. Coat a small nonstick frying pan with nonstick spray. Warm over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Add half of the egg mixture, swirling the pan to evenly coat the bottom. Cook for 30 seconds or until the eggs are set. Carefully loosen and flip. Cook for 1 minute, or until firm.
4. Sprinkle half of the peppers over the eggs. Fold to enclose the filling. Transfer to a plate. Sprinkle with 1 teaspoon of the Parmesan cheese. Repeat with the remaining egg mixture, peppers and Parmesan cheese.

*Serving and nutrition information on flip side of card.*

## ITALIAN BROCCOLI AND PASTA



### INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces fettuccine noodles, uncooked
- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 3 tablespoons green onion, chopped
- 1 14.5-ounce can stewed tomatoes
- 1 ½ teaspoon fresh thyme (or ½ teaspoon dried)
- 1 ½ teaspoon fresh oregano (or ½ teaspoon dried)
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 4 teaspoons grated Parmesan cheese

### DIRECTIONS

1. Cook noodles per package instructions (do not use oil or salt) and drain.
2. Coat a medium skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Sauté broccoli and onion for three minutes over medium heat.
3. Drain tomatoes, reserving juice. Coarsely chop tomatoes. Add tomatoes, juice and seasonings to skillet. Simmer until heated through, about seven to eight minutes.
4. Spoon vegetable mixture over pasta and top with cheese.

*Serving and nutrition information on flip side of card.*

## WINTER CRISP



### INGREDIENTS

#### Filling:

- ½ cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon lemon peel, grated
- ¾ teaspoon lemon juice
- 5 cups apples, unpeeled, sliced
- 1 cup cranberries

#### Topping:

- ⅔ cup rolled oats
- ⅓ cup brown sugar, packed
- ¼ cup whole wheat flour
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon soft margarine, melted

### DIRECTIONS

1. To prepare filling, combine sugar, flour and lemon peel in a medium bowl. Mix well. Add lemon juice, apples and cranberries. Stir to mix. Spoon into a 6-cup baking dish.
2. To prepare topping, combine oats, brown sugar, flour and cinnamon in a small bowl. Add melted margarine. Stir to mix.
3. Sprinkle topping over filling. Bake in a 375-degree oven for approximately 40 to 50 minutes, or until filling is bubbly and top is brown. Serve warm or at room temperature.

*Serving and nutrition information on flip side of card.*

## WINTER CRISP

### NUTRITION FACTS

Serves 6

Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 240	
	% Daily Value (DV)*
<b>Total Fat</b> 2.5 g	4%
Saturated Fat 0 g	2%
Trans Fat 0 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0 mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 20 mg	1%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 57 g	19%
Dietary Fiber 5 g	20%
Sugars 39 g	
<b>Protein</b> 3 g	
Vitamin A	2%
Vitamin C	10%
Calcium	2%
Iron	6%

*\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet.*

*Source: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute/  
National Institutes of Health*

## ITALIAN BROCCOLI AND PASTA

### NUTRITION FACTS

Serves 4

Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 260	
	% Daily Value (DV)*
<b>Total Fat</b> 2 g	3%
Saturated Fat 0.4 g	2%
Trans Fat 0 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0 mg	1%
<b>Sodium</b> 270 mg	11%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 52 g	17%
Dietary Fiber 2 g	9%
Sugars 6 g	
<b>Protein</b> 10 g	
Vitamin A	25%
Vitamin C	70%
Calcium	8%
Iron	15%

*\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet.*

## RED AND YELLOW PEPPER OMELET

### NUTRITION FACTS

Serves 2

Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 100	
	% Daily Value (DV)*
<b>Total Fat</b> 3.5 g	5%
Saturated Fat 0.5 g	4%
Trans Fat 0 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0 mg	1%
<b>Sodium</b> 140 mg	6%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 9 g	3%
Dietary Fiber 1 g	6%
Sugars 2 g	
<b>Protein</b> 9 g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	360%
Calcium	4%
Iron	4%

*\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet.*

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

# In the Mood for Fast Food? Choose Wisely

**A**mericans are eating more meals out. Many experts believe that so much dining out has helped fuel the national rise in obesity.

But at the end of a long day, coming up with a recipe, stopping at the market and making a meal may be more than you can manage. Stopping at your favorite fast-food restaurant may be more convenient.

However, just because you choose to consume fast food doesn't mean you can't try to make a healthy choice.



## Small Choices Can Make a Big Difference

Try making healthy modifications when ordering your fast food favorites. Here are some tips:

- Load up your sandwich with veggies. Lettuce, tomato, roasted eggplant, peppers, mushrooms and cucumbers all are good choices.
  - Choose poultry like turkey and chicken over meat like roast beef.
  - Opt for whole-grain bread over white bread.
  - Skip the cheese. It can add more than 100 calories and more than 10 grams of fat to your meal.
  - Order foods that are not fried.
  - Pick a healthy side item. Instead of chips or fries, ask if cut fruits or veggies are available.
  - If you have to have some kind of potato with your meal, choose a baked potato over fries. Remember to order your baked potato with either vegetables or fat-free or low-fat sour cream or margarine.
  - To add flavor and not fat, try pickles, onions, mustard and ketchup instead of bacon.
  - Order water, black coffee or tea instead of soda.
- Pick a salad that contains mostly vegetables. Watch out for salads with a lot of croutons, bacon bits, meat and regular dressings that can add on a lot of calories and fat. Ask for a low-calorie dressing served on the side instead of on top of the salad.
  - Choose a small or kid-sized order so you don't overeat. If smaller portions aren't available, ask for a to-go box to be served with your meal, and immediately move half the food off your plate.
  - Balance what you eat throughout the day. If you grab a burger for lunch, choose a light salad or other low-calorie dish for dinner.
  - At the café, pick the lower-calorie versions of coffee and specialty drinks for a healthier choice.
  - Avoid high-calorie condiments like mayonnaise. Regular mayonnaise adds nearly 100 calories and more than 10 grams of fat to your meal.



Go to the SuperTracker tool's Food-A-Pedia section at [www.supertracker.usda.gov](http://www.supertracker.usda.gov) for more information on healthier fast food choices.



[www.albany.va.gov](http://www.albany.va.gov)  
[www.bath.va.gov](http://www.bath.va.gov)  
[www.buffalo.va.gov](http://www.buffalo.va.gov)  
[www.canandaigua.va.gov](http://www.canandaigua.va.gov)  
[www.syracuse.va.gov](http://www.syracuse.va.gov)

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**Valid 1/31-2/28/2014 only**

VCS Employee register instructions:  
• Scan item as normal, then use 25% discount key on item.

# A Healthy New Year? Check!

What's your exercise and nutrition goal for 2014? Here's how you can get started achieving your goal:

- **Discuss your goal with your VA PACT.** They can provide you with feedback and give some healthy tips to accomplish your goal.
- **Step it up.** Every month, try to kick it up a notch with your exercise and nutrition goal. For example, try a new vegetable every month or increase your exercise minutes.

“PACT is changing the way health care is delivered in the 21st century. Through PACT in 2013, *more than 93% of patients were seen within seven days* of when **they** asked for an appointment. Patients were able to send over 27,000 secure messages through MyHealthVet to their PACT for *quicker responses to questions* about their care.”

— **Manish N. Merchant, M.D., FACP**  
Chief of Primary Care,  
Albany Stratton VA Medical Center

## HEALTH TIP

A **banana** is a quick source of energy while exercising. The portable fruit is an excellent way to get potassium, which helps your heart, nervous system and kidneys function properly. It provides a needed nutritional boost before or during your workout and is easy for runners, hikers and cyclists to carry.



# JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Did you make your 2014 exercise and nutrition goal? Write it down here: _____ Then place the corresponding sticker here after you have decided on your goal.		<b>1</b>  New Year's Day	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>  Martin Luther King Day	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>  Chinese New Year	

STAY IN TOUCH  
WITH YOUR VA PACT

Did you know that in addition to providing a "medical home" and coordinating your health care needs, your PACT can help you with preventive care and healthy living information? Take advantage of their health coaching and mentoring skills to take control of your health. Work with your team to set personal health goals for the year that are important to you.



# Take Strides Toward Heart Health

Did you know using your feet is one of the best ways to help your heart? Regular aerobic activity like brisk walking can help lower your risk for heart disease by:

- Increasing blood circulation
- Building muscles
- Reducing body fat so your heart doesn't work as hard

So get walking! Before you start:

- Learn the proper form. Keep your chin up and your shoulders slightly back. Point your toes forward. Let your arms swing naturally. Also, wear a comfortable pair of sneakers and dress properly for the weather. Wear boots to walk in the snow.
- Take a walk around the neighborhood. Be aware of your surroundings and stay safe.
- Aim to walk every day or try walking at least three times a week.

“For better heart health: Follow your prescriptions diligently. Missing doses can cause significant harm. When it comes to nutrition, remember that anything you eat out of a can has too much salt. **Kicking your smoking habit** is the single **most effective step to a healthier life**. Every cigarette you smoke increases your risk for heart attack and stroke, both immediately after every inhalation and long-term.”

— **Thirunavukkarasu Pratap, M.D.**,  
Staff Invasive/Interventional Cardiologist,  
Syracuse VA Medical Center

## HEALTH TIP

A healthy diet lowers your risk for heart disease. Consider these numbers for better heart health:

- 4.5 cups of **fruits and vegetables** per day
- 3 servings of whole grains (like **quinoa or oatmeal**) per day
- 1,500 mg of sodium (a little less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp. of **salt**) per day
- 2 servings of oily fish like **salmon** per week



# FEBRUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1  National Freedom Day
2  Groundhog Day	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12  Lincoln's Birthday	13	14  Valentine's Day National Donor Day	15
16	17  Presidents Day Washington's Birthday	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	



SIGN UP  
FOR TELEM MOVE!

Use VA's personalized weight-management program, TeleMOVE!, to keep you in shape. To get started, complete the MOVE!23 questionnaire at [www.move.va.gov/Move23](http://www.move.va.gov/Move23) or at a VA primary care clinic. Write down your retrieval code. Then call **1-877-619-0106** and select **option 1**. A care coordinator will guide you through the next steps.



# Dealing with Dry Mouth

Many Veterans suffer from a dental condition commonly known as dry mouth. If you experience any of these symptoms, you may have dry mouth:

- A sticky, dry feeling in the mouth or throat
- Limited saliva
- A burning sensation in the mouth, especially the tongue
- An altered sense of taste
- Cracked lips, sores or split skin at the corners of the mouth

Unfortunately, dry mouth is a common side effect of most medications that doctors prescribe. These medications are lifesaving, so all we can do is manage the side effects. Try out the strategies listed below and see if they help you.

“To help alleviate dry mouth symptoms, try the following: 1st, **drink at least six glasses of water** throughout the day. Brush your teeth and floss after every meal. People with dry mouth are more prone to cavities. **Chew on sugar-free gum between meals.** This will stimulate saliva and help protect your teeth. Finally, use lip balm to keep your lips moist to prevent cracking and infection.”

— Nithin K. Rao, D.D.S.,  
Dentist,

VA Western New York Healthcare System

## HEALTH TIP

**Onions** contain sulfur compounds that kill mouth bacteria and help fight tooth decay. For a sweet treat that's good for your mouth, try some **frozen grapes**. They can help prevent dry mouth, which increases the risk for cavities and infections.



# MARCH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	 <p>Don't forget to schedule your annual dental exam. Place your sticker here after you've set up your appointment. Remember to write down the date and time in your calendar, too!</p>					1
2  Read Across America Day	3	4	5  Ash Wednesday	6	7	8
9  Daylight saving time begins	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17  St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20  First day of spring	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

MAINTAIN A  
HEALTHY MOUTH

Find out if you are eligible for VA dental care. Contact your local Veterans Service Center. Returning service members may qualify for FREE dental treatment if indicated on their DD214 that a dental exam was not done prior to discharge.



# Keep Your Brain Powered

Exercise, both physical and mental, has been shown to help keep your brain healthy. Some brain-boosting workouts include:

- Reading the paper or a book
- Visiting museums
- Playing puzzle games
- Quilting and sewing
- Learning new skills, like how to use a computer

Remember to do at least one activity that powers your brain each day.

“*Exercising on a regular basis may help lower your risk for Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. Some research has found that **exercise helps brain cells by increasing oxygen and blood flow.** Brain health and cardiovascular health are tied together, so living a heart-healthy lifestyle is good for your brain, too.*”

— **June I. Chang, M.D.,**  
Chief of Geriatric Medicine,  
VA Western New York Healthcare System

## HEALTH TIP

A Mediterranean diet is good for your mind. Recent research found that eating more **fruits, vegetables, fish, olive oil, whole grains and nuts** can lower your risk for dementia. *A bonus:* This diet is also great for your heart.



# APRIL

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 April Fool's Day	2	3	4	5
6	7 National Public Health® Week begins	8	9	10	11	12
13 Palm Sunday	14 Passover begins at sundown	15 Tax Day	16	17	18 Good Friday	19
20 Orthodox Easter Easter	21	22 Earth Day	23	24	25 Arbor Day	26
27	28	29	30 Vietnam War ended			

USE IT OR  
LOSE IT

Stay mentally active by taking advantage of POST-9/11 GI Bill benefits, including on-the-job training and apprenticeships. To learn more, visit [gibill.va.gov](http://gibill.va.gov). Not eligible for these benefits? Check out your local community college, library or community center for some fun, low-cost classes you could take.



# Lift to Relieve Arthritis Pain

Resting on your couch won't help your aching joints long-term. But daily exercise can. Stronger muscles protect joints by absorbing some of the force you place on them. Exercise helps keep your joints flexible by reducing stiffness.

But before you start weight training, keep these pointers in mind to avoid injuries:

- Wear sneakers with good traction.
- Keep your back straight.
- Don't hold your breath—breathe out when lifting.
- Lift and lower weight slowly, with control.
- Start out using a small amount of weight. Progress to heavier weights after you've gained strength.

*“Thirty minutes of brisk walking on a daily basis is the key to good health, especially for Veterans with osteoarthritis. Increasing your daily intake of fresh fruit helps with conditions such as gouty arthritis. This painful condition happens when uric acid builds up in the blood and precipitates as needle-shaped crystals in the joints. It's most commonly seen in men who have obesity, hypertension, high cholesterol and a risk for premature heart disease.”*

— Prashant Kaushik, M.D.,  
Rheumatology Lead Physician/Section Chief,  
Albany Stratton VA Medical Center

## HEALTH TIP

Consuming **orange juice** may be a way to reduce your risk for arthritis. Drinking just one glass a day can keep your joints healthy. Not a fan of citrus? Have a **peach** or a **bell pepper** instead. All three foods have the substance  $\beta$ -cryptoxanthin that may keep arthritis away.



# MAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 National Day of Prayer	2	3
4	5 Cinco de Mayo	6	7	8 Victory in Europe (V-E Day)	9	10
11 Mother's Day	12	13	14	15	16	17 Armed Forces Day
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 Memorial Day	27	28 National Senior Health & Fitness Day®	29	30	31

## CARING FOR YOUR VETERAN

Being the main caregiver for the Veteran you love can be tough, whether he or she has arthritis, cancer or another illness. Help is available for you. Learn more about the support and services offered by VA Caregiver Program at [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov) or call **1-855-260-3274**. Remember to ask about services for post-9/11 Veterans, too.



# Exercise Rx for Diabetes

If you have diabetes, exercise your options: Physical activity can help you manage the disease and reduce your risk for other health problems.

Before you start your fitness prescription:

- Talk with your VA provider. He or she can help you decide when to exercise based on your meal plan, blood glucose level and medication schedule.
- Test your blood sugar and check your feet for sores before your workout.
- Keep a snack with you in case your blood sugar drops.

*“One 45-60 minute session of moderate intensity exercise can substantially decrease blood sugar levels throughout the next day in people with Type 2 diabetes. This is true for those who use insulin and those who don’t. Some examples of moderate intensity exercise include brisk walking, riding a bike or any other aerobic exercise that brings your heart rate up.”*

— Carlos Mendez, M.D.,  
Director of the Diabetes Management Program,  
Albany Stratton VA Medical Center

## HEALTH TIP

Next time you bake, try this: Cut the sugar in your dessert recipe by one-third to one-half. To enhance the flavor, add sweet spices such as **vanilla, cinnamon and nutmeg** to taste. **Almond extract** is a good flavor substitute, too. Reduce the fat by replacing oil or butter in baked goods with an equal amount of **applesauce**.



# JUNE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 <small>Flag Day U.S. Army Birthday</small>
15 <small>Father's Day</small>	16	17	18	19 <small>Juneteenth (the end of slavery in the U.S.)</small>	20	21 <small>First day of summer</small>
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 <small>Ramadan begins at sundown</small>
29	30	 <p>Green and yellow summer squash are rich in vitamin C, which helps develop and maintain the body's tissues, and potassium, which helps your heart, nervous system and kidneys work. Sauté squash with other vegetables to make a bisque, or cook it and add to your spaghetti.</p>				



STAY WELL WITH  
MYHEALTHeVET

MyHealtheVet provides you online access to your health records and allows communication between you and your health care team. How can you join? Go to [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) and register, then go to your nearest VA facility and sign a release of information form so you can get started using MyHealtheVet.

# Healthy You, Healthy Baby

You already know that exercise can help you maintain a healthy weight when you're pregnant. But your workouts can keep your baby's weight from being excessive, too. One study found that women who exercised during their second and third trimesters were much less likely to give birth to a baby 8.8 pounds or heavier.

To keep exercising when you're pregnant, try swimming, dancing or taking prenatal aerobic classes at least three days a week. Yoga, water aerobics and stationary biking are also good choices.

“High levels of anxiety and stress can be harmful during pregnancy. *Schedule quiet time for you and your developing baby.* Turn off excess noise and distractions, such as TVs and phones. Sit in a quiet, comfortable space with some calming music or practice singing lullabies. You can even talk to your baby about your future plans for him or her and about the positive aspects of pregnancy.”

— Rachel Grimm, M.D.,  
Women's Health Champion/Physician,  
Albany Stratton VA Medical Center

## HEALTH TIP

If you're pregnant and craving cheese, it's OK to consume hard cheeses like **cheddar and Swiss**. But some soft cheeses, like feta and Brie, could make your baby sick. Remember to only eat cheeses that say "pasteurized" on the label. Also, keep your cheese in a clean and cold (below 40 degrees) refrigerator.



# JULY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4 <i>Independence Day</i>	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 <i>Parents' Day Korean War ended</i>	28	29	30 <i>Father-in-Law Day</i>	31		



## SUPPORTING MOMS-TO-BE

VA offers a variety of maternity benefits to pregnant Veterans, such as postpartum care and childbirth preparation classes. You can also receive breast pumps and nursing bras. For more information, contact your Women Veterans Program Manager or visit [www.visn2.va.gov](http://www.visn2.va.gov). Click on "Health Care Services" and select "Women's Health Services."



# Fitness for Fall Prevention

Falls are very serious. In fact, they can even be life-threatening.

Keeping active can help reduce falls. Regular exercise — especially exercises like tai chi, which improves balance — can make you stronger and lower your risk of falling. Routine eye exams can identify any vision problems that could lead to falls.

*“Be aware that people who have fallen once are at a very high risk for falling again. If you have fallen a few times, you may need to use a cane or a walker. A change in medication could help you as well. It’s crucial to be evaluated by a VA specialist as soon as possible if you are having balance problems, especially if you have a grocery store trip in your near future!”*

— **Barbara Bates, M.D., MBA,**  
Chief, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation,  
Associate Chief of Staff, Quality Management,  
Albany Stratton VA Medical Center

## HEALTH TIP

Bad eyesight can increase your risk of falling. One simple way to protect your vision is to eat a healthy mix of fruits and veggies. **Spinach, kale, carrots and collard greens** are all eye-friendly foods. The omega-3 fatty acids in **salmon, tuna and halibut** are also beneficial.



# AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4 U.S. Coast Guard Birthday	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 New York State Fair in Syracuse begins	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

TROUBLE WITH  
YOUR VISION?

If you're experiencing problems with your eyesight, see your VA primary care provider. He or she can refer you to an optometrist or ophthalmologist for an evaluation.



# Foods That Fend Off Cancer



Certain foods have been shown to stop cancer from forming in your body.

Try adding these cancer-fighting foods to your diet:

- Green tea
- Strawberries
- Apples
- Red wine
- Ginseng
- Cinnamon
- Tuna
- Parsley
- Tomato
- Olive oil
- Dark chocolate
- Soybeans
- Blackberries
- Raspberries
- Blueberries
- Oranges
- Grapefruit
- Nutmeg
- Pomegranate
- Pumpkin
- Garlic
- Lemons

“To keep cancer at bay, *it's important to have recommended screening tests, such as colonoscopies, mammograms, PAP and PSA tests. Be on the lookout for signs of skin cancer and report any suspicious moles to your VA primary care provider. Losing weight is key* as well, because obesity has been linked to some forms of cancer.”

— Lynn Steinbrenner, M.D.,  
Chief of Oncology/Hematology,  
VA Western New York Healthcare System

## HEALTH TIP

Exercise has been found to help decrease your chances of being diagnosed with cancer, particularly breast and colon cancer. Evidence has shown that being active can reduce your risk of endometrial, lung and prostate cancers, too.



# SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Labor Day	2 Victory over Japan (V-J day)	3	4	5	6
7 Grandparents Day	8	9	10	11 Patriot Day	12	13
14	15	16	17 Constitution Day	18 U.S. Air Force Birthday	19 National POW/MIA Recognition Day	20
21	22	23 First day of fall	24 Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown	25	26	27
28	29	30	 <p><b>DOCTOR VISIT</b></p> <p>Make sure you see your VA provider this year for an annual physical. He or she can help you determine what cancer screenings you may need.</p>			

GET SCREENED

Besides eating right, getting screened for certain cancers could save your life. Check out the Routine Health Care Monitoring chart in the front of this calendar. It will show you what screenings and other preventive services you may need this year. Make an appointment to get screened before 2014 passes you by!



# Small Steps Keep Depression Away

Studies show that exercise reduces the risk for depression. If you're feeling blue, anxious or stressed, try:

- Cleaning the house
- Taking a walk
- Doing some type of physical activity with friends
- Turning exercise into a family outing with a bike ride or a nature walk through one of New York's state parks

*“Feeling sad isn't necessarily the same thing as depression. If you think you might be depressed, asking your VA primary care provider about your symptoms is a good place to start. Many medical conditions and even medications can cause depressive symptoms or depression. Your primary care provider can help you determine the cause.”*

— **M. Craig Sandberg, M.D.**,  
Chief Psychiatrist,  
Bath VA Medical Center

## HEALTH TIP

These foods that contain omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to help keep anxiety and sadness away: **walnuts, salmon, mackerel, canola oil and flaxseeds**. One study showed that people who eat a Mediterranean diet (rich in **fruits, veggies, fish, olive oil, whole grains and beans**) are more energetic and content.



# OCTOBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3 Yom Kippur begins at sundown	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 Columbus Day U.S. Navy Birthday	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Mother-in-Law Day	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween	

GET HELP  
NOW

If you're feeling depressed, know that you are not alone and that help is available. Talk with your VA provider. For immediate assistance, call the Veterans Crisis Line at **1-800-273-8255** and **press 1**, text **838255** or visit the online chat at **[www.VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net)**. Responders are available 24/7 to offer confidential help.



# Eat Fruits and Veggies to Quit Smoking



A recent study found that smokers who eat more fruits and vegetable tend to smoke fewer cigarettes per day. Study participants said that these foods gave cigarettes a bad taste.

Boost your fruit and vegetable intake to help you stay smoke-free:

- Have a smoothie made with fruit and low-fat milk.
- Add apples, grapes, celery or cucumber to chicken or tuna salad.
- Warm your day with a baked apple or pear.
- Make chili with beans and veggies instead of red meat.

“Smokers, here’s an idea to help you quit: **Stop smoking and use the money you’ll save (about \$1,500 a year) to pay for a gym membership.** By no longer buying cigarettes, you’ll save more than enough to cover the membership cost. If you are a pack-a-day smoker, you’ll also save about two extra hours per day that you used to spend smoking. Now you can put that time toward getting a really good workout. It’s a win-win!”

— Timothy Parish, CASAC,  
Addiction Therapist,  
VA Western New York Healthcare System

## HEALTH TIP

Exercising can help you quit smoking. One study showed that after exercising, smokers felt less inclined to have a cigarette. Physical activity has also been shown to reduce a smoker’s risk for lung cancer.



# NOVEMBER

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY



**Everyone Needs a Flu Shot.** All people should get their flu shot between October and March. Experts recommend the vaccine for everyone age 6 months and older, including groups who are at a high risk for serious flu-related complications. This includes pregnant women or those who have a chronic medical condition, such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Daylight saving  
time ends

Election Day

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

Marine Corps  
Birthday

Veterans Day

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

Great American  
Smokeout

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

Thanksgiving

Native American  
Heritage Day

KICKING  
THE HABIT

Want to quit smoking but need some assistance? VA can help. Call **1-855-QUIT VET (1-855-784-8838)** to speak with a smoking-cessation counselor. Your counselor can help you develop a quit plan and give you strategies to prevent relapse. Your VA provider can also give you a prescription for smoking-cessation medication.

# Relax This Holiday Season

With all the holiday preparation and get-togethers, you may forget to do one simple thing: breathe. Remember to do the following this season when you are feeling stressed:

- Stop and take deep breaths. Focus solely on your breathing for a few minutes.
- Turn out the lights and listen to some music.
- Schedule some quiet time.
- Exercise. Even though it's winter, don't forget to keep moving! Staying active helps combat stress.
- Spend time relaxing with your loved ones.

“Older Veterans may have more trouble both falling and staying asleep. To get a good night's rest during the holiday season and year round, *avoid drinking and limit your naps during the day to 30 minutes.* Keep your regular bedtime hours even during this busy time of year. Talk with your VA primary care provider about your medications if you are having trouble sleeping, too.”

— **Wilfred R. Pigeon, PhD, CBSM,**  
Acting Research Director,  
Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention,  
Canandaigua VA Medical Center

## HEALTH TIP

The holiday season can sometimes mean overindulging. Remember to:

- Enjoy treats in smaller portions. Choose a smaller plate at parties. Fill half of your plate with vegetables.
- Start with small servings of the foods you love. Eat slowly. Stop eating when you feel full.
- Be aware of your alcohol intake and its effect on your body.



# DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 World AIDS Day	2	3	4	5	6
7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8	9	10	11	12	13 National Guard Birthday
14	15	16 First night of Hanukkah	17	18	19	20
21 First day of winter	22	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas	26 First day of Kwanzaa	27
28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	 Remember to take time to concentrate on your breathing during this busy season and beyond to help you relax.		

HEALTH CARE  
CLOSE TO HOME

If the weather outside is frightful, that doesn't mean you have to miss out on your health care. VA's telehealth program can help you lose weight, manage chronic conditions and get specialty care, while cutting back on travel time and costs. For more information and to watch video demonstrations, visit [www.telehealth.va.gov](http://www.telehealth.va.gov).

Network 2 Communications  
VA at Clinton Crossings  
919 Westfall Road  
Bldg. B, Room 115  
Rochester, NY 14618

10411M

# Reaching us is easy

## Our Locations



[www.visn2.va.gov](http://www.visn2.va.gov)

### VA Medical Centers

**Albany Stratton**  
113 Holland Ave.  
Albany, NY 12208  
518-626-5000  
1-800-223-4810

**Batavia**  
222 Richmond Ave.  
Batavia, NY 14020  
585-297-1000

**Bath**  
76 Veterans Ave.  
Bath, NY 14810  
607-664-4000  
1-877-845-3247

**Buffalo**  
3495 Bailey Ave.  
Buffalo, NY 14215  
716-834-9200  
1-800-532-8387

**Canandaigua**  
400 Fort Hill Ave.  
Canandaigua, NY 14424  
585-394-2000  
1-800-204-9917

**Syracuse**  
800 Irving Ave.  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
315-425-4400  
1-800-221-2883

**Community-Based  
Outpatient Clinics**

**Auburn**  
17 Lansing St.  
Auburn, NY 13021  
315-255-7002

**Bainbridge**  
109 N. Main St.  
Bainbridge, NY 13733  
607-967-8590

**Binghamton**  
425 Robinson St.  
Binghamton, NY 13901  
607-772-9100

**Catskill**  
Greene Medical Bldg.  
159 Jefferson Heights  
Catskill, NY 12414  
518-943-7515

**Cliffton Park**  
1673 Route 9  
Cliffton Park, NY 12065  
518-626-5205

**Coudersport**  
**Satellite Clinic  
of Wellsville**  
24 Maple View Lane  
Suite 2  
Coudersport, PA 16915  
814-260-9342

**Dunkirk**  
Valor Health Center  
166 E. Fourth St.  
Dunkirk, NY 14048  
1-800-310-5001

**Elmira**  
Health Services Bldg.  
200 Madison Ave.  
Suite 2E  
Elmira, NY 14901  
1-877-845-3247,  
ext. 44640

**Fonda**  
Camp Mohawk Plaza  
2623 State Highway 30A  
Fonda, NY 12068  
518-853-1247

**Glens Falls**  
84 Broad St.  
Glens Falls, NY 12801  
518-798-6066

**Jamestown**  
608 W. Third St.  
Jamestown, NY 14701  
716-338-1511

**Kingston**  
63 Hurlay Ave.  
Kingston, NY 12401  
845-331-8322

**Lackawanna**  
Our Lady of Victory  
Family Care Center  
227 Ridge Road  
Lackawanna, NY 14218  
716-822-5944

**Lockport**  
5883 Snyder Drive  
Lockport, NY 14094  
716-438-3890

**Malone**  
3372 State Route 11  
Main Street  
Malone, NY 12953  
518-483-1529

**Mansfield**  
**Satellite Clinic  
of Elmira**  
63 Third St., Suite 104  
Mansfield, PA 16901  
570-662-0507

**Massena**  
1 Hospital Drive  
Massena, NY 13662  
315-769-4253

**Niagara Falls**  
2201 Pine Ave.  
Niagara Falls, NY  
14301-2300  
716-862-8580

**Olean**  
465 N. Union St.  
Olean, NY 14760-2658  
716-373-7709

**Oswego**  
437 State Route 104E  
Oswego, NY 13126  
315-207-0120

**Plattsburgh**  
80 Sharon Ave.  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901  
518-561-6247

**Rochester**  
465 Westfall Road  
Rochester, NY 14620  
585-463-2600

**Rome**  
125 Brookley Road  
Griffis Park  
Rome, NY 13441  
315-334-7100

**Saranac Lake**  
**Satellite Clinic  
of Elizabethtown**  
33 Depot St.  
Saranac Lake, NY 12983  
518-626-5237

**Schenectady**  
1322 Gerling St.  
Sheridan Plaza  
Schenectady, NY 12308  
518-346-3334

**Springville**  
**Satellite Clinic  
of Lackawanna**  
Springville Primary Care  
27 Franklin St.  
Springville, NY 14141  
716-592-7400

**Tompkins/Cortland  
County**  
1451 Dryden Road  
Freeville, NY 13068  
607-347-4101

**Troy**  
Troy Primary Care  
Practice  
295 River St.  
Troy, NY 12180  
518-274-7707

**Watertown**  
19472 U.S. Route 11  
Watertown, NY 13601  
315-221-7026

**Wellsville**  
3458 Riverside Drive  
Route 19  
Wellsville, NY 14895  
607-664-4660  
1-877-845-3247 (Bath)

**Westport/  
Elizabethtown**  
7426 NYS Route 9N  
Westport, NY 12993  
518-626-5236

**Vet Centers**

**Albany**  
17 Computer Drive W.  
Albany, NY 12205  
518-626-5130

**Binghamton**  
53 Chenango St.  
Binghamton, NY 13901  
607-722-2393

**Buffalo**  
2372 Sweet Home Road  
Suite 1  
Buffalo, NY 14228  
716-862-7350

**Rochester**  
2000 S. Winton Road  
Bldg. 5, Suite 201  
Rochester, NY 14620  
585-232-5040

**Syracuse**  
716 E. Washington St.  
Suite 101  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
315-478-7127

**Watertown**  
210 Court St., Suite 20  
Watertown, NY 13601  
315-782-5479

### Caregiver Support

**1-855-260-3274**

For help with caring for  
Veterans with disabilities  
[www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov)

**National Call Center for  
Homeless Veterans Hotline**

**1-877-4AID-VET**

**1-877-424-3838**

**TelCare**

**1-888-838-7890**

24-hour, toll-free medical  
advice for enrolled Veterans

**Veterans Crisis Line**

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

### Veterans Service Contact Center

**1-888-823-9656**

For information on eligibility,  
VA health care benefits and  
enrollment, or questions on  
your billing statement

**E-donate**

**[www.visn2.va.gov](http://www.visn2.va.gov)**

You can now make a dona-  
tion online to the Veteran  
program of your choice

**Reliable Health**

**Information on the Web**

**[www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)**